



U.S. Department of Justice

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MEDIA RELEASE
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**SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE
HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA ("HIDTA") TASK FORCE**

**FOURTH MEMBER OF SALEM, NH/LAWRENCE, MA "CRACK" COCAINE RING
ENTERS GUILTY PLEA TO FEDERAL DISTRIBUTION CHARGES**

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and DEA Resident Agent in Charge Leo Ducey announced that **Lizette HERNANDEZ**, 36, of Lawrence, MA was convicted today of crack cocaine distribution charges.

According to affidavits accompanying federal criminal complaints issued by U.S. Magistrate Judge James Muirhead during June and July, 2004, HERNANDEZ was part a four-person drug distribution network that sold "crack" cocaine, obtained from a Lawrence, Massachusetts-based source of supply, to an undercover DEA Special Agent during the spring and summer of 2004 in Salem, NH and Methuen, MA. Also facing federal prison sentences after entering guilty pleas in the case are:

- Ramoon SURIEL, 35, of Lawrence, MA;
- Carmen LLAURADOR, aka Carmen Diaz, 46, of Lawrence, MA ; and
- Opinio PENA, 45, of Lawrence, MA.

HERNANDEZ entered a guilty plea before U.S. District Judge Joseph A. DiClerico, Jr. to an information charging her with possession with intent to distribute over 50 grams of cocaine base, aka "crack" cocaine. Because of the quantity of crack cocaine involved in the case, HERNANDEZ faces a minimum 10-year term of imprisonment, and a potential life sentence.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "This Office is committed not only to aggressively prosecuting drug traffickers operating in Manchester and New Hampshire's other larger cities, but also those importing illegal drugs into New Hampshire over the Massachusetts border. The Southern New Hampshire HIDTA Task Force conducted a thorough and aggressive investigation in this case."

The conviction resulted from a Southern New Hampshire HIDTA Task Force, located at DEA's New Hampshire headquarters. The prosecution is being handled by First Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("New England OCDEF").